

# A U S T R A L I A N G A R D E N H I S T O R Y

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBH 1733

## A TREE AND ITS STORY

Toowoomba, with its mild climate, rich red volcanic soil and regular rainfall, has long been famous for its trees, especially its Camphor Laurels, but to me, the most interesting tree in the city is a huge old *Magnolia grandiflora*. This particular tree played a central role in *The Singing Gold*, a sensational novel of the 1920s.

In those far off days, before television, before the appearance of "Womens Weekly" and its various competitors, a tremendous number of Australian households subscribed to the American 'Ladies Home Journal', a large glossy weekly which always had an eye catching, pictorial cover. It had a greatly admired Editor, Edward Bok, who managed to insert a surprising number of serious articles among the highly coloured fiction and advertisements that filled most of its papers. In 1927 people were puzzled when they saw a news item in the daily papers stating that Edward Bok had just paid a huge price, constituting a world record, for the serial rights to a novel by an Australian that no one had ever heard of — DOROTHY COTTERELL. Everyone was asking — "Who can she be?"

Dorothy Cotterell's own life story was as dramatic as any of the novels she was to write. Born in Ballarat in 1902, she developed polio when she was five, and she was never to walk again. Her parents separated when she was a child, an almost unheard of thing in those days. She was brought up by her mother's relatives in far western Queensland where, with true Australian ingenuity, she trained cattle dogs to pull her wheelchair. Then, as an adolescent during the First World War, she went to live with her grandmother, who was renting *Simla*, a huge old house on the crest of the Great Dividing Range in Toowoomba.

The large block of land on which this house stood had been taken up in the early days by a Mr Hamilton who named it *Simla* because of its altitude and its wonderful views across countless spurs of the Range. He was a member of the Queensland Acclimatization Society which meant that he received packets of seeds from other countries and, as these grew into plants, he set them around his land — thus an avenue of mixed conifers leads to the main entrance gates in Curzon Street, and an avenue of Camphor Laurels leads to the tradesmen's entrance in Bridge Street. In other parts of the garden were an extensive orchard of exotic fruit, some huge camellias and jacarandas, and a wonderful magnolia.

*The Singing Gold*, Dorothy's first and most famous book — highly praised by Dame Mary Gilmore — is largely set



in the romantic garden of *Simla*. It is written in the first person and is largely autobiographical, but Dorothy depicts herself as a slim, glamorous maiden with whom a young neighbour, Clippings, falls desperately in love. He is too shy to speak of his passions so, as they walk in the garden...

"He broke a great pale flower from the magnolia tree. He busied himself over it for a while with a little piece of stick and a reckless sort of energy. Then he thrust it into my hands. Although battered, it was still pale and luminous and heavenly scented, and then I saw that he had written on it, and on the bruised cream velvet of the petals the characters began to shape themselves into the words — 'I love you'."

(In real life Dorothy was to marry her Clippings and to spend many happy years with him — and I believe he is still alive, in his 90s).

As well as describing the author's courtship, *The Singing Gold* depicted life in Toowoomba, seen through the sharp

eyes of a young girl. It exposes the townspeople's petty rivalries and jealousies, their pretensions and taboos. When the first copies of the book reached the town they caused, in that small circle, ripples such as those which *'Thorn Birds'* was to cause throughout Australia fifty years later. People were outraged that they had been depicted in that way!

When Dorothy Cotterell's family left *Simla*, the Red Cross turned it into a home for T.B. soldiers, and eventually it was developed. A road named Simla Street was cut through its acres of garden and parts were subdivided for housing. My parents bought the fine old house with its surrounding blocks, thinking they would retire there some day.

My husband and I spent much of his last leave, in 1941, in the garden there. The magnolia seemed to flower more profusely that year than ever before. My children and I lived in *Simla* during the war years, hoping always for news from Singapore, so the garden holds many memories, both happy ones and sad ones for me.

Whenever I visit Toowoomba I walk along Simla Street, and gaze with wonder again at the huge tree with its creamy flowers, towering above the houses that have sprung up in the old garden.

Helen H. Vellacott

[Those who want to learn more about the remarkable Dorothy Cotterell should watch for a book on her life and her work which is being prepared by Barbara Ross in Canberra.]



Zoological Gardens, South Perth c 1900.

Courtesy Mrs M. Manning

As the Western Australian representative on the National Management Committee I am pleased to write this second editorial of the Society's newest journal. First I want to congratulate the team of contributors on the very successful launching of *Australian Garden History*, it is a tremendous first issue and I am sure members will look forward to future issues with great interest.

The first issue of *Australian Garden History* took a retrospective look at the founding of our Society and of the development of the field of garden and landscape history in Australia. Mention was made of the growing interest in garden history which occurred in the 1970s and of the role of various studies in fostering this growth. I was fortunate to be a part of the historic gardens studies which were initiated by the Australian Heritage Commission and in 1979 when the Western Australian study was being undertaken I was very conscious of the fact that the study was breaking new ground in the area of garden research and conservation. That study established a framework for identifying historic gardens and provided an overview of what gardens existed in the south west of the state. A substantial number of gardens were listed which it was felt warranted further research and twelve gardens were entered on the National Estate Register in 1980. These gardens being among the first to be listed by the Australian Heritage Commission.

The listing of gardens is however not an end in itself and where it leads to complacency can even be detrimental. Most owners were pleased to have the historic significance of their gardens recognised but had little understanding of the need for appropriate conservation and management policies. In a state still without heritage legislation for the protection of the built environment government agencies have not taken a lead in providing either the impetus or expertise in the area of garden conservation and management despite the fact that almost all those gardens listed were in fact public properties. Several of the most notable gardens which were listed have since undergone substantial redevelopment, guided unfortunately by priorities other than historic significance.

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Courtesy, Miss Barbara Evans

'Unalla', Peppermint Grove, W.A. c 1925.

Established gardens are particularly vulnerable in that they provide an attractive, ready made setting for new buildings and other community facilities and are viewed in this way rather than places which are important in their own right. The Society in Western Australia can play a part in raising community awareness of the need for proper conservation and management procedures for historic gardens as well as enabling people to appreciate the historic significance of the familiar environments in which they live.

The Society's journal is one avenue by which this consciousness can be raised by bringing the discussion of garden history into the public arena and giving it the authority of a national concern. Our journal has the advantage of being free, to an extent of the constraints which commercial considerations and advertising tend to impose on publications and we as a Society should be looking to ways of extending the availability of the journal through libraries and other outlets where it will attract wider public attention and can serve an educational function.

I would like to see the Society actively promoting discussion on the issues of garden conservation and taking a leading role in keeping these issues in the public eye through the pages of the journal. As a national Society we

have a wonderful opportunity for presenting the richness and diversity of Australia's garden history and of encouraging an understanding of the regional differences which are an important part of the serious study of this heritage. For the journal to provide a national coverage it will require input from all the state branches on a regular basis and with this in mind I make the suggestion that an editorial advisory committee be established with representatives from all the branches, whose function will be to ensure that our journal is a truly national forum for the dissemination and discussion of ideas and information concerned with garden history in all its aspects.

*Oline Richards*

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# AUSTRALIAN GARDENING JOURNALS

This article is the first in a projected series covering gardening journals published in Australia during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These articles will aim to expose the rich written heritage left by journalists which now remains, with a few well known exceptions, virtually unused by historians. Richard Aitken has selected *The Home Gardener* to commence this series for the simple reason that he was several issues in his own collection, the State Library of Victoria has a complete run and that the journal has not to his knowledge been used as the basis for any historical research.

## The Home Gardener (1917-54)

It is our intention to place before all lovers of flowers a journal having for its object the education of the amateur, in the simplest possible form, in beautifying his or her garden, and, in doing so, to help them attain the best results possible.

So Thomas A. Browne introduced his editorial aims to readers of the first issue of *The Home Gardener* on 15 January 1917. Although the title page included the suffix "A practical journal for all classes of gardening" its substitution on the cover with the phrase "for the amateur" reflected reality more sharply. The journal was clearly intended to be a practical and inexpensive aid to suburban gardeners.

Browne and his publishers Mitchell and Casey made a timely entry into the market. Melbourne suburbs such as Preston, Ivanhoe, Heidelberg, Kew, Surrey Hills and Caulfield were all beginning to develop beyond their status as rural settlements and new home makers sought practical advice. Development of these suburbs in the interwar period was rapid and their rural nature made large blocks the norm. Typically of a quarter of an acre, they contrasted

strongly with tiny inner suburban blocks developed by previous generations.

The Great War had also given a stimulus to gardening, not only in the practical need for produce but also the desire to excel in floriculture. A handful of flowers such as roses, sweet peas, gladiolus and dahlias dominated local gardening and the "civilising" influence of gardening was still a strong theme lingering from the nineteenth century. As Browne remarked in his opening editorial "nothing gives a better index of the contentment and interest in the home than the appearance of a well-kept garden surrounding it". To aid the war effort on the "home front" Browne urged horticultural societies to donate profits from their autumn shows to the Red Cross.

At this period there was a strong need for topical information to suit local gardeners but a regular flow was absent. The journal *Home and Garden Beautiful* (formerly *The Journal of Horticulture of Australia*) had ceased production in April 1916 and the well known garden guides by Yates and especially Brunning remained the only staple for Melbourne audiences. *Home and Garden Beautiful* had been a quality journal, printed on good quality stock and sold for sixpence. By contrast, Mitchell and Casey printed *The Home Gardener* on cheap paper and the text initially ran to only 24 pages keeping the price to a modest threepence.

The first issue set the tone of the journal and due to T.A. Browne's long involvement as editor (1917-47), *The Home Gardener* remained remarkably consistent in its outlook. Three main categories of horticulture — flowers, vegetables and fruit — were given regular columns describing seasonal operations while more general articles gave supplementary information on particular species or varieties. Topical features such as "The Wattle — Our National Flower" and "Soil Management" vied for space with occasional reprinted articles from overseas sources.

Contributors tended to be well known nurserymen, leading figures in local horticultural societies and

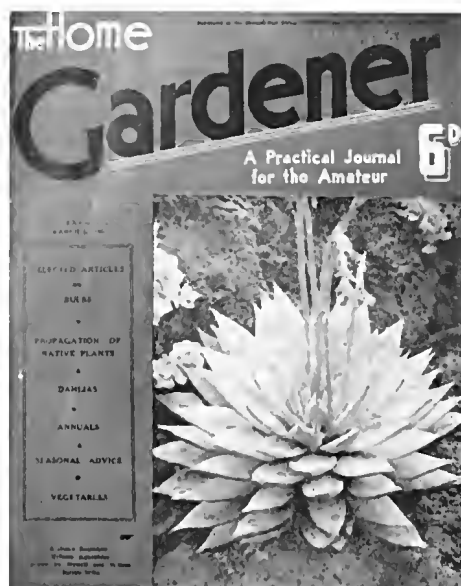
Initial cover design (1917-25).



Cover design during the period 1928-34.



Final cover design (1934-54).







"A pretty view in the garden of Mrs Barlow, Newball Avenue, Moonee Ponds" (July 1932).

specialists such as curator E. Gray, of the Kyneton Botanic Gardens. Some articles had their genesis in talks first broadcast on radio stations 3LO (Melbourne) and 3HA (Hamilton). Correspondents also contributed to a "letters" column and the geographical spread of metropolitan and rural readers is easily traced. Horticultural societies figured prominently with news of meetings reported and a comprehensive list of local societies given in each issue. Starting with eighteen in the first issue, the number of Victorian societies grew to almost 70 by the early 1930s. Of these, the Women's Horticulturist's Association, established in 1917 at the School of Horticulture, Burnley (and prominently reported by Browne), appears to have been overlooked by the radical fringe of garden historians.

This emphasis on local contributors was reinforced with the addition in July 1927 of a column entitled "Prominent Horticulturalists". This was included on the title page and featured nurserymen, leading members of the horticultural societies and well known garden identities. The inaugural feature examined the careers of James Allen and T.A. Stewart, both prominent rosarians. Although women were not ignored they were seldom featured in this biographical section. As the feature continued to June 1940, more than 150 potted biographies are awaiting garden history researchers. Obituaries were also published to commemorate the work of leading figures in the local gardening scene as, for instance, in 1923 with the death of J.C. Cronin, Director of Melbourne's Botanic Gardens.

Browne's strong editorial link with the nursery trade was also maintained by his publishers Mitchell and Casey. They printed nursery catalogues for local firms such as Sparks and McAlpine, S. Brundrett and Son and the Bluff Road Nursery as well as such books as B.V. Rossi's *Modern Roses in Australasia* (1930), hailed by promotional material as "the book of the hour!" Strong competition for this market was provided by the Horticultural Press from its inception in 1924, however, and that firm secured a far wider and more prestigious range of Melbourne nursery clients, including Railton, Law Somner, Gill and Searle, Hodgins, Purves, the Ormond Plant Farm and D.J.W. Chandler.

Mitchell and Casey's link with other gardening publications was beneficial for *The Home Gardener*. The firm published the *Australian Rose Annual* (from 1928 to 1950) for the various national rose societies and the printers frequently utilised coloured printing blocks from the *Rose Annual* (and also the parent publication, the *English Rose Annual*) for the cover of *The Home Gardener*. Rosarian interest was interspersed on alternate months with illustrations taken from leading local nursery catalogues depicting new seasonal varieties of flowers. By such a ruse, the readers of *The Home Gardener* benefitted from the inclusion of a coloured cover depicting popular plant varieties, local rose societies were given extra publicity, nurserymen gained cheap and prominent advertising and the publishers avoided the cost of separate printing blocks.

This concentration of floral themes for the magazine cover was indicative of the editorial content of the journal as a whole. Little space was given to garden design or architectural elements such as paths, walls or horticultural buildings. Wider landscape issues were almost totally absent just as native species rated only sporadic coverage. If general advice on garden design was lacking, almost every issue included at least one photograph of a noteworthy local garden and these specific examples form a rich visual record of suburban gardens in Melbourne.

An exception with regard to garden design was a series of diagrams with short captions published in 1920. These gave suggestions for front garden layouts and represent a striking contrast to the symmetrical formality of many nineteenth or early twentieth century designs for similar situations. Another exception was the 1917 article "Garden Making" by W.R. Warner of Camberwell. "If you are artistic, you will leave the cutting out of stars, moons, crescents, etc. severely alone" was his caustic advice to those dreaming of celestial horticulture in their suburban lawns.

The late 1920s and early to mid 1930s witnessed the heyday of *The Home Gardener*. An increase was made from 24 to 32 pages in June 1927 and this coincided with the



"A suburban garden showing what can be accomplished in a small area" (January 1917).

### Figures on Designs

Figures in designs give approximately the class of plant that will be suitable for the respective positions.

Figure 1 represents groups of standard Roses.

Figure 2 — Massed bedding annuals, such as Phlox, Pansies, Dianthus, or any dwarf plants.

Figure 3 — Herbaceous perennials, such as Penstemons, Perennial Phlox, Delphiniums, etc.

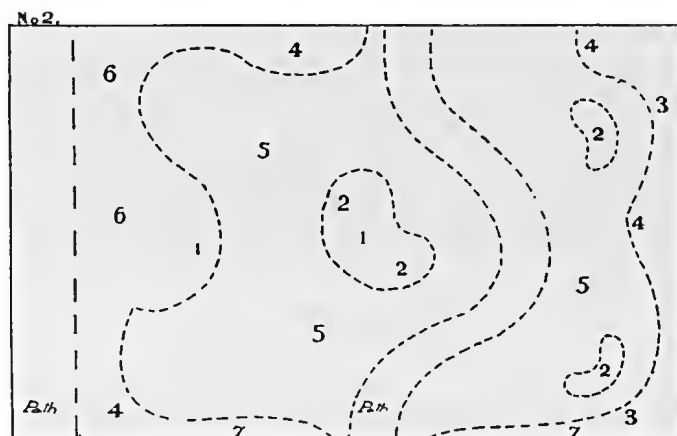
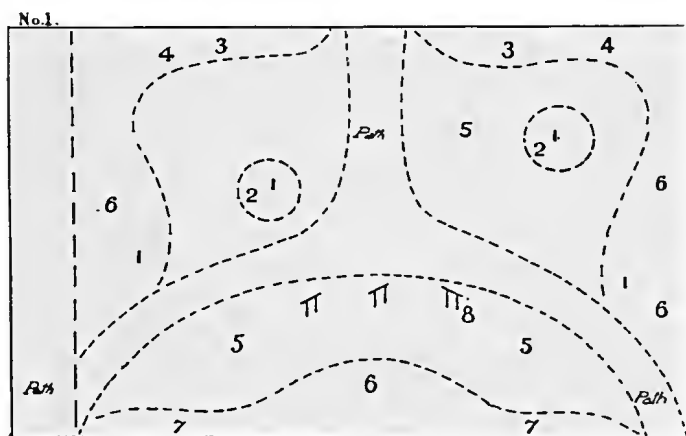
Figure 4 — Dwarf flowering shrubs.

Figure 5 — Lawn.

Figure 6 — Flowering Shrubs, average 6 or 7 feet.

Figure 7 — Hedge.

Figure 8 — Roses on arches.



"Design of a garden for a frontage of 80 to 100 feet" (November 1920).

inclusion of coloured cover photographs. The price also increased to 6d at this time (having risen to 4d in 1920). A cactus column was commenced in 1934 and in that year G.K. Cowlshaw edited a New South Wales section accounting for an extra 8 pages in each issue. *The Home Gardener* had periodically courted an interstate readership by inclusion of special features as, for instance, in 1923 when South Australian notes were printed. Neither this nor the New South Wales section lasted long. The Melbourne-centred publication could not compete for interstate readers with journals such as *Garden and Field* published in Adelaide or *Garden and Home Maker* in Sydney.

The advent of war in 1939 marked a downturn in quality of *The Home Gardener*. The magazine dropped from 32 pages back to 24 and paper quality deteriorated. In 1941-42 content again dropped progressively to 16 pages, well below the original 1917 bulk. The cover artwork was altered to incorporate a more contemporary art deco lettering style and was further simplified. The journal was still popular however and in 1939 the publisher claimed that *The Home Gardener* was the "oldest established paper of its kind in the Commonwealth" and had the largest circulation amongst several competing horticultural journals.

The last issue to be edited by T.A. Browne was volume 31, number 6, issued in June 1947. His remarkable span of 30 years as editor was not the subject of any editorial comment and the next issue listed S.E. Frederick as "managing editor". Earlier that year, Browne had commenced as a gardening feature writer for *Australian Home Beautiful*, with his first article "Your new garden" appearing in the April 1947 issue. Browne was obviously considered an asset and his *Home Beautiful* editor described him as "one of the most widely-known authorities on practical gardening in Australia".

There was little appreciable change in editorial policy following Browne's departure. Emphasis of floriculture continued and little new ground was broken. Strong competition was provided by the established journals such as *Australian Home Beautiful* and *Australian Garden Lover*. As well, new titles such as *Your Garden* (1948) and the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria* (1947) gave home gardeners a wide choice.

With a brief notice in volume 38, number 6, June 1954, *The Home Gardener* ceased publication. The reason was not stated, but comparison with contemporary garden journals leaves the impression that *The Home Gardener* was outclassed in terms of production and content. How much the departure of editor T.A. Browne was linked with the magazine's demise is not known. His editorial style carefully eschewed personal comment and therefore regrettably little is known of Browne or his activities outside *The Home Gardener*. His long experience, however, may have been the difference between success and failure of a journal competing in an increasingly sophisticated and saturated market.

Comparisons between *The Home Gardener* and other gardening journals in Australia are difficult to make given the paucity of critical historical studies. As with most magazines, contemporary fashions for certain plants were very evident in both editorial and advertising columns. Native species fared tolerably well in an atmosphere of increasing acceptance yet *The Home Gardener* was not their especial advocate. Despite its impersonal style, moral lessons shone through, especially at times of war and gardening was viewed as uplifting in matters temporal and spiritual. It seems, in conclusion, that the journal was a mouthpiece of its time, neither intellectual in its approach to suburban gardening nor demeaning to enthusiasts who were not part of the wider picture.

Richard Aitken

# DANIEL BUNCE

## Gardener and Botanical Explorer

**D**aniel Bunce (1813-1872) lived in exciting times for a botanical explorer and gardener. During his lifetime much of the world was botanically discovered as plant collectors, and directors of Europe's botanical gardens engaged in the pursuit of new species and genera. It was the age of Hooker at Kew and plant collectors like Fortune of China and Douglass of North America. Bunce stands apart from these eminent persons; he never for instance collected for or corresponded with Hooker and, as we will see, his Latin was far from perfect. Yet for all these short-comings Bunce has an important story to tell. It is a story of how an emigrant in colonial times came by means of plant collecting, exploration and gardening to understand a little of what he called "the nature of the country".

Daniel Bunce arrived in Hobart in 1833 when he was twenty years of age with his life ahead of him. Befitting a collector of the London Horticultural Society one of his first activities on coming ashore was to go on a botanical ramble to Mount Wellington. Whilst scrambling over the creek banks of the Sassafras Valley he sighted the shrub *Goodenia*; pausing, he collected its flower and later described it as "a genus of a singular, irregular, bright flowering plant". Bunce's choice of plant is both interesting and revealing for the *Goodenia* is marked out by the unusual characteristic of having a five cleft corolla. By means of Linnaean taxonomy Bunce had identified, immediately upon arriving in the colony, the singular and irregular in the Australian environment.

Bunce continued this interest in scientific classification when he layed out his nursery at Denmark Hill, Launceston according to both Linnaean classification and the natural orders of Jussieu. Paralleling Bunce's attempts at plant classification were the sophisticated endeavours of the colonist, Ronald Gunn, who in his efforts to classify the Tasmanian flora corresponded with William Hooker, the celebrated future director of Kew Gardens.

Whilst Gunn was collecting knowledge about the new world Bunce, through his nursery, was importing European plants into the colony. In 1837, for instance he imported English forest trees and other choice British shrubs and plants from the London nursery of Messrs. Whitney and Osborne of Fulham, and is also credited, according to his obituary, with having introduced Lad's Love to Van Dieman's Land.

That such an incident should be remembered thirty-odd years later suggests the sense of nostalgia the colonists felt for 'home', their place of origin. Yet the introduction of plant material from overseas was not only due to nostalgia but also reflects the strategies employed by British nurserymen to obtain colonial flora. The lengths that British nurseries went in order to obtain these plants included entrusting prospective settlers with Wardian



Daniel Bunce.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

cases; so when Dr Hobson set sail for Van Dieman's Land in 1838 he received written instructions from the nursery Loddiges and Son, Hackney on how to care for a case containing *Arbutus pilosa*, *Magnolia grandiflora exoniensis*, *Alstroemeria peligrina* and other plants in the hope that the case would be returned to London full of the flora of the colony.

In 1839 Bunce left Van Dieman's Land, crossed Bass Strait and arrived in Port Phillip, whereupon he quickly arranged an expedition to Westernport. There for the first time he encountered Aborigines who by day acted as his guides and by night provided him with ethnographical information. Observing them, he recorded how they gathered native tubers, what they ate and the names they gave to plants as well as listening to their stories. One of the stories he gathered during that expedition explained why the *Melaleuca* was called "the good mother". Observing how the seeds of the *Melaleuca* clung to its stem, the Aborigines thought of it as a good provider and so named it "the good mother".

This interest in Aboriginal culture led Bunce to make the acquaintance of a Melbourne merchant, William Hull, who was particularly interested in the antiquity of the Aborigines, the results of which he published in *Remarks on the Probable Origin and Antiquity of the Aborigines of New South Wales* during 1846. It was through Hull that Bunce was accepted to accompany Leichhardt on his

proposed expedition to Western Australia. Hull had written to Leichhardt recommending Bunce accompany him on the expedition. So Bunce following Leichhardt's instructions packed his portmanteau with "three red shirts, three mole skin trousers, and many, many stockings", and set sail for Sydney where he briefly met Leichhardt before driving goats and cattle to Moreton Bay where he was to begin the expedition proper.

However, before the expedition began Leichhardt and Bunce had an argument as to the amount of time that was to be spent botanizing; and to ensure his will prevailed Leichhardt limited Bunce to half a ream of paper used in collecting specimens. Bunce appears to have ignored this dictate for when the party reached Bokkurer Creek on the last day of December 1846, he busied himself making "a most significant collection of specimens and seeds"; the specimens alone numbered 120. As Bunce collected these he entered them in a book he kept for the purpose "arranging them according to their natural affinities" and made notes "as to where and when" he found them together with observations about the nature of the soil he found them growing in, and how they corresponded with the flora of Port Phillip and Van Dieman's Land. It was Bunce's intention to use these observations for his projected *Flora Terrae Indegina* [sic] *Australis*. As well Bunce also busied himself collecting 36 grasses for the reason that "nothing tends to show the real and natural view of a new country and its adaption to grazing purposes than the multiplicity and types of grasses found growing there".

Bunce also had ambitions to publish an account of the expedition and kept a separate journal which he filled with "copious notes on the nature of the country". The ever inquisitive collector, Bunce filled his journal with remarks

on the country's vegetation and soil; 'the manners, customs and language' of the northern Aborigines and compared them with their counterparts in the southern districts; the range of the thermometer, the weather and readings of longitude and latitude; as well as sketching "anything particularly striking" which could illustrate his projected journal. It was not until 1857 that Bunce's planned publication came to fruition when it appeared as *Travels with Dr Leichhardt in Australia*.

During the expedition Bunce made an important discovery when the expeditionary party surprised some Aborigines who in their haste left behind a wooden bowl containing seeds of the bottle tree. Bunce had observed this plant during the journey, but had been forbidden by Leichhardt to stop to gather any of its seeds. So when the party finally dismounted, Bunce seized the opportunity to collect its seeds and scooped up those in the Aboriginal bowl.

For a moment the two different cultures were united by the language of plants.

Five days later the party actually encountered some Aborigines who stood their ground instead of absconding and waved a wattle branch in the time honoured custom of meeting a new tribe from another territory. The Aborigines, suspicious of these interlopers attired in hats, red shirts, mole-skins and stockings, stood at a distance. It was Bunce who bridged this gulf when he waved a great bunch of specimens he had in his hand and proceeded to hand them one by one to the Aborigines who began

*Geelong Botanic Gardens c 1870. This rare view, taken from the Curator's house, and published here for the first time, shows Bunce's glasshouse and aviary and the adjoining 'nursery'.*





to name them. Holding up a *Cymbidium* they called out "N'yanggan"; holding up a nettle they called "paree"; and so it continued until holding up another plant they began to rub their bodies to suggest its poisonous properties, crying "N'gneera". For a moment the two different cultures were united by the language of plants.

Soon after, the expeditionary party came upon a creek in a rocky place which Leichhardt likened in a lengthy description to a medieval nunnery. Bunce's response was different; as a botanical collector he looked beyond the imported notion of the picturesque and saw the place in terms of the new plants he discovered there.

Later, the fever Bunce had been carrying for over a week took hold of him. In an extraordinary scene in the middle of the night when the fever broke Bunce called out to one of the party: "Mr Perry take care of my specimens". Near death, all Bunce could think of was his precious specimens. Two days later Bunce had recovered and was to be found rejoicing in his deliverance, collecting specimens and seeds.

...when the fever broke Bunce called out to one of the party: "Mr Perry take care of my specimens."

Bunce was not the only member of the party to fall ill during the expedition; as its members made their way along the Condamine River more and more became fever ridden. The expedition was a disaster and matters may well have been worse had not Bunce planted native melon seeds around waterholes during the expedition's advance. What a plantsman Bunce was, planting seeds for a future contingency; an action which helped to keep the party alive.

On reaching the refuge of the eastern seaboard, Bunce stayed in Queensland whilst Leichhardt returned to Sydney whereupon he sent "a good number of seeds which Mr Bunce collected during my unfortunate journey", including two "extremely interesting" plants: the bottle tree which was "unknown to the European and horticultural world" and "a malvaceous plant, very much like a Hibiscus", to the pastoralist and plantsman, William Hannibal Macarthur, with the suggestion that they be shared with Bidwill, the newly appointed curator of Sydney Botanic Gardens. At the same time Leichhardt forwarded a set of specimens to his friend and Bunce's Port Phillip patron, William Hull.

The failure of the expedition led to animosity between Leichhardt and the rest of the party, and on the next expedition to Swan River Leichhardt determined to take none of his former party. Instead Leichhardt suggested that Bunce avail himself of the Queensland squatters' hospitality to collect specimens and seeds. Bunce's acceptance of this suggestion was influenced by Leichhardt's awareness of the country beyond Moreton Bay which he had written ecstatically about:

What am I to say about this multitude of plants and

shrubs and rare trees that grow in the brush that covers the mountain over an area of fifty English miles long and ten miles wide.

Overwhelmed, he was reminded of entering a Gothic cathedral, and likened the majestic Bunya Bunya to a pillar supporting the heavens.

Leichhardt too had made enquiries amongst the Aborigines about what lay beyond the Bunya Bunya brushes and had learned of another *Araucaria* they called "dandajom" at Wide Bay. Now to a man who when he was near to death had cried "Mr Perry save my specimens", the prospect of discovering new plants would have been particularly alluring. Moreover, Leichhardt encouraged Bunce to see the Moreton Bay brushes as an undiscovered territory where there were "many trees and seeds which have not yet been sent home", collection of which would occupy him for "several years".

For Bunce the prospect of being able to simultaneously live cheaply and collect seeds for transmission to English nurseries must have seemed a perfect combination. Bunce stayed in Queensland during 1848 collecting plants among which was the bulb *Calostemma* which he sent to the Sydney Botanic Gardens.

During the following year Bunce returned to Port Phillip where he undertook an expedition to Adelaide. Leaving Melbourne on 8 November 1849 with his Aboriginal companion, Jemmy, he was soon journeying across the saltbush and mallee country of north-west Victoria toward the Murray. During this time he was frequently reminded of things he had seen on his trip with Leichhardt. In December he encountered the first quandong trees since leaving the northern districts and was so moved he wrote:

None but a lover of plants can appreciate the feelings of a botanist on thus falling in with plants which he has for a long time lost sight of.

Bunce's words reveal his great love of plants; he met them in the light of so many "old and dear friends"; a candytuft seen a few days later was greeted as one of "my old Fitzroy friends" he had first found when following the tracks of the unfortunate explorer Kennedy (who had been speared by the Aborigines).

Overwhelmed, he was reminded of entering a Gothic cathedral, and likened the majestic Bunya Bunya to a pillar supporting the heavens.

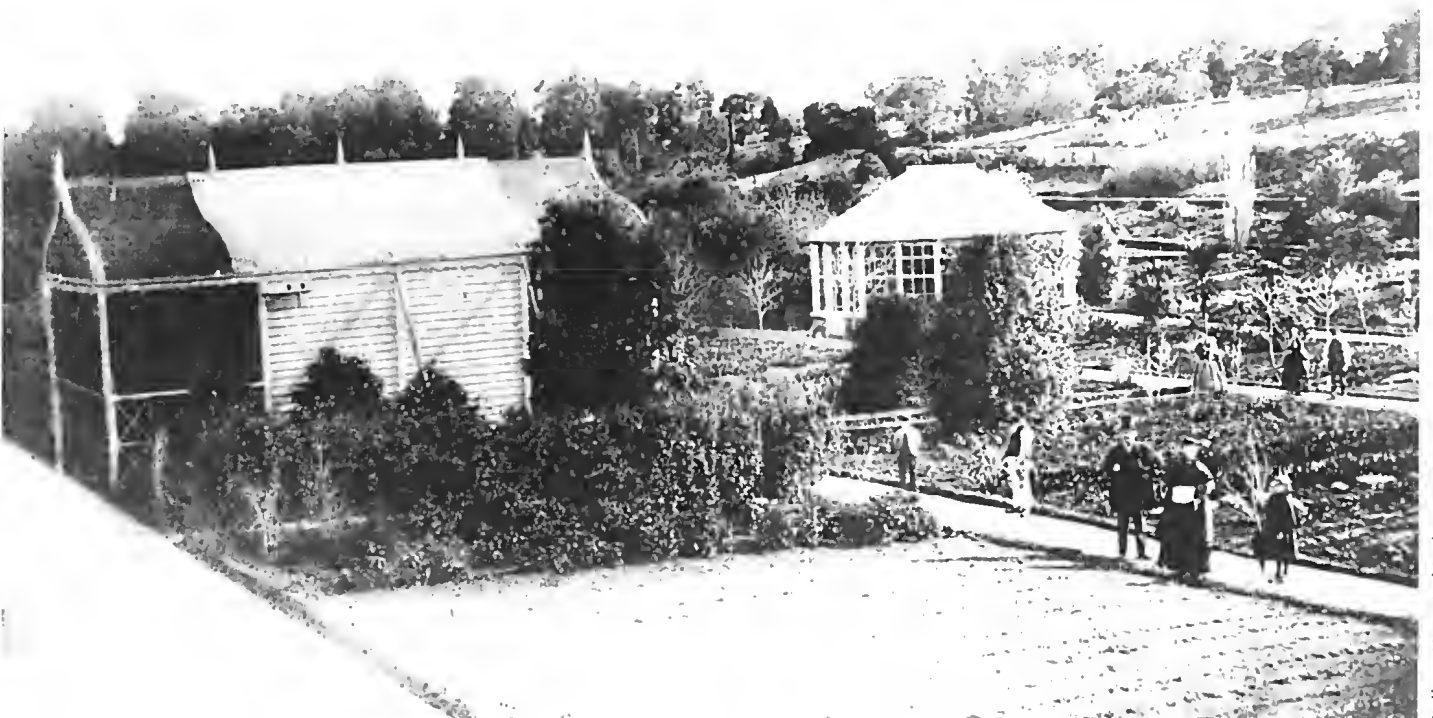
By the end of the year Bunce was at Jamieson's station where he accompanied the resident squatter into the paddocks to discover "among the salsolaceous plants a very pretty pink flowering plant" which he thought was like a silene. All the time Bunce was attempting to classify the plants he found. At the same time Bunce also recorded the names the Aborigines gave to plants, noting how the mymiong was given its name because its tubers were like



Geelong Historical Records Centre

*Daniel Bunce and his wife Julia outside their cottage in the Geelong Botanic Gardens c 1868.*

*Daniel and Julia Bunce and several of their children in the 'nursery' c 1870. The rectilinear layout of the garden contrasts with the more fanciful design of the aviary. Bunce's cottage was located at the top right hand corner of the photograph commanding a view across the gardens.*



Ballarat Historical Parks Association

fingers and how names for plants changed with each Aboriginal tribe.

Bunce undertook such observations sensing the imminent demise of these people; believing that "anything relating to a race of people who there is every reason to believe will in the course of a few years disappear from the face of the earth cannot fail but be interesting". By 1851 he had published *Language of the Aborigines of the Colony of Victoria* which he prefaced with the opinion that if by any chance these people can be civilized, Europeans must learn to speak the Aboriginal language. Bunce was a man of rare sensitivity.

During that year gold was discovered in Victoria. Bunce, sharing in the gold mania which struck the colony, was amongst the first arrivals on the Clunes diggings, reporting on the gold discovery for the *Argus* before joining the rush to the Mount Alexander field. Yet even in such circumstances Bunce, the botanical collector, was never far away and he made time to write botanical notes about what he saw growing on the Mount Alexander goldfields.

From Mount Alexander Bunce is reputed to have gone to Bendigo and managed a mine, returning to Melbourne in 1855 to edit the *Rural Magazine*. This itinerant life came to an end in September 1857 when he was appointed Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens; this man who had begun his colonial career as a nurseryman and who had become a botanical collector, explorer, and observer of the Aborigines before taking up gold mining at last found permanence; he was to remain in Geelong for the rest of his life.

During these years Bunce established the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Initially he found it was a difficult place to establish a garden as the wind blew straight off the nearby sea. To ameliorate these conditions he ploughed the perimeter and planted seeds of bluegum and Cape wattle to create a windbreak and sited the nursery in a protected dale on the two hundred acre site. Here Bunce nurtured seeds of the enormous conifer from the west coast of America, *Wellingtonia gigantea*, and received horse chestnuts from Whitley and Osborne, the Fulham nursery with which Bunce had had such a long association. In time this nursery became the Botanic Gardens proper.

In the selection of plant material the Gardens were also influenced by the Chinese collection of the plant hunter, Robert Fortune, who transmitted tea plants to India and great numbers of different plants to Kew. By 1861 tea plants had been received by Bunce in the Gardens and in the following year the ginkgo, which can still be seen growing there, had been planted. Such planting reflects the wider cultural milieu which saw Samuel Hannaford, one of the leaders of Geelong's scientific and literary circle, review Fortune's latest botanical expedition to China, *A Residence Amongst the Chinese, for the Victorian Agricultural and Horticultural Gazette*. In the same manner, Bunce's establishment of a pinetum in 1861 reflected the introduction into England by the plant hunter, Douglass, of North American conifers and the popularity of the pinetum amongst colonial gardeners.

Bunce saw himself as one of these collectors, being known by 1858 as "the oldest extant explorer in the

colony", a reputation no doubt much enhanced by his publication of *Travels with Dr. Leichhardt in Australia* the previous year. His botanical garden too reflected his own plant hunting; there he grew the seed of a grevia he had collected during his 1848 excursions in Queensland, and in his newly established Gardens he planted "the product of some seed I got when I was with Leichhardt". Memories of these expeditions were to remain with him for the rest of his life.

In perceiving himself in this way and in his sensitivity toward the original occupants of Australia, Bunce identified himself with the colony in a different manner to horticulturalists such as Josiah Mitchell who were to settle in Victoria during the gold rushes. Mitchell, as President of the Victorian Gardeners' Mutual Improvement Society during 1860, believed the colonists occupied "a position in Australia analagous to that which the first Romans did when they settled in England" and that they were the beneficiaries of "all the light which science and art had thrown upon cultivation from that time to this". Mitchell, unlike Bunce, had not observed the Bunya Bunya growing in the Moreton Bay brushes, but had first encountered it as a "stunted specimen" housed and tended carefully at Kew. Compare this description of the Bunya Bunya with Leichhardt's ecstatic description, likening it to Gothic vaults soaring heavenwards, and you sense the difference between the emigrants who had encountered the country at first hand and the horticulturalists who had not.

These newcomers looked on Victoria as providing marvellous conditions in which to experiment with the plants collected from every part of the globe and saw, as another member of the Gardeners' Mutual Improvement Society, William Smith, did, the successful establishment of such plants as proof that "in all new countries, or rather in the history of colonisation, the native woods, like the wild animals and the wild men, must give way to the advance of civilization and the new order of things that accompanies progress". Smith found evidence of this progress in the many enclosures and public reserves around Melbourne where the original trees were "dying away".

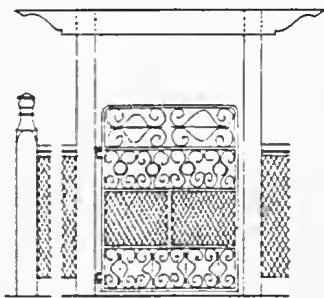
These attitudes stand in stark contrast to Bunce's attitude towards the indigenous people and plants of the colony. Rather than welcoming the demise of the native woods and the Aborigines, Bunce through his plant collecting and exploration developed an affinity with them so that when he died in 1872 the last of the Geelong tribe, King Billy, stood at the entrance to the Geelong Gardens amongst the assembled mourning party. His presence paid a fitting tribute to Daniel Bunce, gardener, botanical collector and friend of Australia's first inhabitants.

Paul Fox

This is an edited transcript of the address given by Paul Fox to the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society (Victorian Branch), 1988. The Victorian Branch has provided financial assistance to allow the publication of this paper.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**A Guide to Identification, Conservation & Restoration of Historic Fences & Gates c. 1840-1925** by Richard Peterson (Technical Bulletin 8.1, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), Melbourne, 1988, 96pp., RRP \$19.95).



Houses from the inter-war period dominate my suburb. Mostly of timber, many retain crimped wire fences while their brick neighbours generally have solid low brick fences, detailed very much in the austere style of their parent houses. In the last few years however, such fences have been assaulted by renovators seeking to restore houses "to their former glory". What a misnomer! Instead, by erecting elaborate timber picket fences more suited to a suburb from the boom period of the 1880s and 90s, they are steadily eroding the character of their newly-adopted suburb, only to move on when their palates are further tickled by ever more beguiling housing stock. This has happened to five houses in my street alone and I fear a sixth next week.

The same remarks apply to inner suburbs where tiny terrace houses are given new fences befitting a merchant's city mansion. I was glad then to see the latest National Trust technical bulletin devoted to fences and gates. Here the author, architect Richard Peterson, has meticulously researched, photographed, drawn and described fences of all periods since the 1840s. What excuse could there be for owners to erect monstrously incongruous fences after this rich account.

And yet I fear that this book will do no more to halt the misguided destruction of our early fences than the first National Trust bulletin did to encourage restraint in advertising signs which now despoil our fine Victorian and Edwardian commercial buildings. The

message in Richard Peterson's work is clear: fences must be appropriate to the period and scale of the residence they enclose. Yet I think this message will only be read by the converted. Modesty and discretion are not traits eagerly embraced by enthusiastic house renovators.

Richard Aitken

**THE GARDEN TRIUMPHANT: a Victorian legacy** by Dr David Stuart (pub. Viking Penguin Books, London, 1988 pp 317 29 col. p1. 60 b/w pl. rrp \$50.00)

Books which discuss the development of horticulture and flower gardening during the Victorian era are of considerable interest to Australian garden historians because they cover the period which was most influential in stimulating attitudes, plant choices and styles in our own brief history. Brent Elliott's *Victorian Gardens* (Batsford, 1986) gave us a scholarly work drawn from the vast resources of the Lindley Library (he is Archivist-Librarian there to the Royal Horticultural Society). Dr Stuart's book is distinguished too, perhaps a trifle less academic but with much more attention to the fine detail of 19th century plants and gardens and especially good descriptions of the social milieu which elevated gardens and garden-making to the heights of Victorian fashion. Particular attention is given to small gardens, though illustrated examples such as Mrs Lawrence's villa near Drayton Green were decidedly up-market. This is an appropriate reflection of two of the most telling influences of the times: the rise of the middle-classes and the advent of leisured women gardeners. Just as illuminating is a chapter on the men and lads who made up the ranks of professional gardeners and the system in which they worked. The middle chapters which deal with the gardens made in the formative years of the style by horticultural personalities of the age are good but slightly marred by a niggling condescension on the author's part toward the attitudes of gardeners of the day, particularly over their choice of vividly coloured flowers and their preference for contrasting colours rather than complimentary shades.

An attempt is made through the text to link gardening developments on both sides of the Atlantic but this is not entirely satisfactory due to the scatter of references and lack of American detail which reduces the subject to an interesting aside. Too many authors are lured by the appeal of foreign markets and the impact of their work is lessened somewhat as a result. Insufficient information and underdeveloped international themes are the base of many a gardening book and not only those with an historical focus. The final chapter, titled "Sea Change" begins well enough; the text advances towards the end of the century with a good discussion of the opposite views of William Robinson and Reginald Bloomfield over "naturalism" and "formalism" in garden design but when the author describes Gertrude Jekyll's planting schemes as "a modification of Victorian modes of bedding" he makes a breathtaking and contentious point which will rankle many gardeners and suggests a possible momentary lapse in concentration. Perhaps the author ran out of steam right at the end of such a formidable task?



19. Sub-tropical bedding produced some surprises.

*The Garden Triumphant* is, despite a few small irritations, a very useful study which can offer us many clues about the development of Australian gardens; there is a very sound bibliography and there are many attractive (and instructive) illustrations taken from old gardening books and periodicals.

Trevor Nottle



The response to the BULBS and BLOSSOMS TOUR to Victoria's Western Districts was very gratifying indeed with all available places booked and a waiting list of hopefuls. This is very good news for the Society, particularly since the Tour has attracted some new members who joined when they heard about the tour and decided to secure a place by taking membership immediately.



Just for the record, it is not necessary to be a member of the Society to take part in one of its tours, but preference is always given to members. This means that, should enough members wish to participate and so fill the available places, then the non member would miss out. One of the aims of running more tours is to attract new members and, so far at least, this has proved to be the case.

Meanwhile, considerable interest has been expressed in a Tour planned for the end of this year's Annual Conference. This **Jacaranda Jaunt and New**

**England Experience** will begin in Brisbane on the afternoon of Monday October 30.

The first two days of the Tour are based in Grafton. Jacaranda City is lovely at any time but during the Jacaranda Festival, even more so! A variety of public and private gardens will be visited on Tuesday.

On Wednesday morning the Tour moves on towards Armidale and the very different gardens of the New England region. Three gracious historic gardens, around and about the quaint historic township of Gyra, are highlights today.

Historic Gardens in and around Armidale, the delightful Armidale art gallery and possibly a concert are planned for Thursday. The luxury bus will move at a leisurely pace towards the Hunter Valley on Friday, stopping at places of interest along the way. A selection of wineries can be visited on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. After lunch at Hungerford Hill the group will continue to Sydney where the tour ends. *Nov 4<sup>th</sup>*.

Again, this tour has an all-inclusive price of \$635 which includes six days, five nights in comfortable and friendly accommodation, all meals, entrance fees, tour guides and coach travel. Single supplement accommodation is available for an additional \$98. Numbers will be limited, bookings are taken on a "first-in" basis, simply send one of the booking forms in this Journal with \$100 deposit per person to P.O. Box 972, BOWRAL, 2576. For more detailed information about this tour please contact Diana Forrester or Leanne Timbs on (048) 87 1310.

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#### QUEENSLAND BRANCH

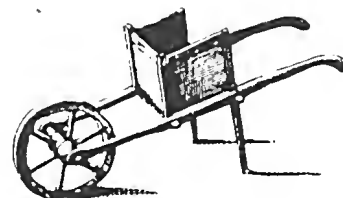
For all information please contact the Branch Secretary:

Mr D. Perkins  
6 Creswick Street  
Clayfield Qld 4011  
Ph: (07) 262 2193 a.h.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH

Unless otherwise specified, for all information please ring Mr Trevor Nottle on (08) 339 4210 a.h. or address correspondence to:

The Secretary,  
AGHS — S.A. BRANCH  
"Walnut Hill"  
5 Walker Street  
Stirling SA 5152



#### SOUTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

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The Secretary  
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P.O. Box 972  
Bowral NSW 2576

#### SYDNEY AND

#### NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

For information please contact:  
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60a Shell Cove Road  
Neutral Bay NSW 2089  
Ph: (02) 953 1916

#### TASMANIAN BRANCH

For information please contact the Chairperson:

Mrs Fairie Nielson  
"Pigeon Hill"  
RSD 469  
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Ph: (004) 33 0077  
or the Secretary:  
Mrs Jenny Prevost  
P.O. Box 29  
PERTH TAS 7300  
Ph: (003) 98 6252

#### VICTORIAN BRANCH

For information please contact:  
Francine Giffedder  
Branch Secretary  
P.O. Box 114  
Hawkesburn, Vic 3142  
Ph: B: (03) 650 9424  
H: (03) 429 3042

#### WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

For information please contact:  
Ms. Anne Willox  
Branch Secretary  
P.O. Box 814  
West Perth WA 6005  
Ph: (09) 381 1675

## National Management Committee

Mrs Oline Richards will be standing down from the National Management Committee of the Society. She will not be seeking re-election. John Patrick and Richard Ratcliffe have also expressed their intention of standing down permanently this year. Nominations for the National Management Committee must be received before October 8, 1989. A brief resume of no more than 100 words should accompany each nomination.

## Churchill Fellowships and Historic Gardens

Richard Ratcliffe, Honorary Secretary of the Society, has been awarded a Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship to enable him to travel to England, Switzerland and USA next year to study techniques used in the conservation of historic parks and gardens and their adaptation for public use. As well as visits to many gardens the study will include a visit to the Archive of Swiss Garden Architecture and Landscape Planning to investigate the conservation of and public access to historic documents related to gardens. The fellowship is for a period of 12 weeks.

John Hawker, a member of the AGHS Victorian Committee is currently in England on a Churchill Fellowship where he is examining management of historic gardens. This has included a two week placement at the extraordinary Victorian garden *Biddulph Grange* in Staffordshire. Of particular importance to his work at the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne were working visits to the Chelsea Physic Garden and the Botanic Garden at Padua.

## Annual Conference Update

The arrangements for the 1989 Annual Conference are well underway and the programme for the four days is looking increasingly interesting. In addition to the programme advertised, we have discovered and added a Jocelyn Brown designed garden at Jondaryan called *Yarran*. We will now be visiting this, with *Moorlands*, on Saturday morning, leaving *Gabbinsbar* until Sunday.

At Ipswich, on Monday, we plan to see private gardens in the morning, including 19th century *Rockton*, so that

those who have planes to catch that afternoon won't miss out.

Sir James Killen has agreed to be our guest speaker at the Conference Dinner on Saturday evening (which is included in your registration fee).

The accommodation at McGregor College is very modern and comfortable with large rooms and a rural atmosphere. Some rooms have private bathrooms, while others share a bathroom between two single rooms. In my opinion, McGregor College is preferable to the motel (which I stayed in recently). Please note that the motel has changed its name since the Conference Brochure was printed, from the "Four Seasons" to the "Burke and Wills". It is also very pleasant but, to me at least, the college seems far better value!

There will be an evening meal provided at McGregor College on Friday and Sunday nights. This will cost \$5 per head and non-residents may also dine at McGregor if they give the college warning earlier in the day. Wine is available at the college, but no spirits.

The Conference is filling up fairly quickly so be sure to send your appli-

cation as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment. For further information please contact Diana Forrester or Leanne Timbs on (048) 87 1310.

*Alethea Russell*

Chairman Conference Committee

## Tax Deductible Donations to the A.G.H.S.

Over the last decade the A.G.H.S. has been able to sponsor research into garden history, and the production of related publications. Such important work has only been possible because of the generosity of several members of the A.G.H.S. The society believes it is of utmost importance for these programmes to continue, and also to establish a special fund to commission significant articles for the Journal.

In the past the Society's benefactors have taken advantage of the tax deductible donation scheme available to The A.G.H.S. through the National Trust of Australia (Victoria).

Such sponsorships can be named or anonymous or from individuals or corporations.

The Society will be delighted to hear from you if you are able to provide funding for these special programmes. Without your assistance they may not occur.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER 1989

### *Friday September 1*

Southern NSW Branch — SLIDE PRESENTATION and TALK by Mrs Betty Hoskins about the history and development of three historic Southern Highlands gardens including "Cardrona", owned by Sir Cecil and Lady Hoskins, "Wensley dale" owned by Don and Betty Hoskins and "Invergowrie", previously owned by Sir Cecil and Lady Hoskins. This event will take place at Mt Broughton Country Resort in Moss Vale commencing at 8.00pm. Tickets will be \$8.00 for Members or \$10.00 for Non-Members (including light refreshments afterwards). If you wish to enjoy a delicious dinner beforehand, we recommend that you book a table in the charming Baronial Hall at Mt. Broughton. For more information contact Mrs Kelly Wright on (048) 61 1732 or simply send your booking slips directly to the Secretary.

### *Saturday September 2*

ACT Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — to be held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, guest speaker to be confirmed. There is no cost for this event.

### *Saturday September 10*

Queensland Branch — Outing to Mt Tamborine.

### *Friday September 15*

Tasmania Branch — Trip to MORELLA BULB FARM at Bruny. This should be a very interesting outing with excellent possibilities to purchase unusual bulbs. Information from Branch Secretary.

### *Saturday September 16 to Sunday October 15*

ACT Branch — "FLORIADE" the Canberra Spring Festival centred at Commonwealth Park, Canberra (includes floral and horticultural displays, music, entertainment, garden visits, etc.) For information contact Agnes Martin on (062) 46 2085.

### *Saturday September 23*

Sydney Branch — THE MACQUARIE STREET WALK. The Sydney Branch of the AGHS is planning an interesting day's outing for members and their friends on Saturday September 23. The Macquarie Street walk will start with a conducted tour of *Government House* gardens which are managed by the staff of the *Royal Botanic Garden* of Sydney. Lunch will be in the Botanic Gardens' new rose garden.

As the *Spring in the Gardens* festival is being held on the Parade Ground (between the Conservatorium of Music and Government House) members may either buy their lunch there, or bring a picnic from home.

After lunch the walk continues to Parliament House where we will visit the roof

garden of the new Parliament House extension.

This is a unique opportunity for garden lovers since both gardens are State showpieces, rarely accessible to members of the public. Members may also find other plantings and the landscaped areas in Macquarie Street of interest.

This is certainly an event not to be missed! Numbers are limited. PLEASE NOTE THAT MEMBERS ARE TO GATHER AT THE GATES OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE AT 10.15am. The group will be taken inside at 10.30am and latecomers will not be admitted.

Please apply for tickets by September 20, 1989. Complete a booking slip in this Journal and send this, with a self-addressed envelope and your cheque, to: AGHS — Sydney Branch, GPO Box 3997, Sydney, NSW 2001. COST: Members \$20, Non-members \$25. For information please contact Mrs Robin Lewarne on (02) 953 1916.

## OCTOBER 1989

### *Saturday October 21*

VIC Branch — WORKING BEE, "Belmont", Beaufort. The Society has worked before in this garden with its mixture of cottage plantings and mature trees. Wear working clothes, BYO tools. Lunch will be provided. A bus will leave from Tasma Terrace, Parliament Place at 8.30am sharp. Cost is \$20 per person. Please send a booking slip, your cheque and a self addressed envelope to the Branch Secretary. For information please contact John Hawker on (Bus.) (03) 650 9424.

### *Sunday October 22*

South Australia Branch — ANNUAL PICNIC. Visiting Collingrove, Lindsay Park, Martinsell. \$5.00 per car. Meet 10.00am Collingrove. Picnic lunch at Martinsell. Send booking slip and money to Branch Secretary by October 19. Map will be sent by return post.

### *Saturday October 28*

VIC Branch — SEMINAR. An all-day seminar will be held by the Ornamental Plant Collections Association at the National Herbarium in Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Speakers will include botanists Peter Lumley and Roger Spencer, Rob Cross and Susan Irvine. There will be a guided tour of the collections held in the Royal Botanic Gardens. BYO lunch — morning and afternoon tea provided. The event commences at 10.00am and costs \$20 per person. The cut-off date for bookings is October 13, 1989. Please send your cheque and booking slip to the Branch Secretary. For information contact John Hawker on (Bus.) (03) 650 9424.

### *Friday October 27 to Monday October 30*

THE AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND

NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. This year the Conference will be based in Toowoomba, Queensland. For more information see the Conference Update in this Journal. The Conference Brochure with attached Booking Form was inserted in the June/July issue, if you require another please contact Head Office on (048) 87 1310.

### *Monday October 30 to*

### *Saturday November 4*

JACARANDA AND FLAME TREE TOUR FROM BRISBANE TO SYDNEY. A special bus tour will be offered to members wishing to explore a variety of interesting public and private gardens between Brisbane and Sydney. If you are interested and would like more information please contact Diana Forrester or Leanne Timbs at Head Office (048) 87 1310 or simply complete a booking slip and forward with \$100 deposit per person to: AGHS, P.O. Box 972, BOWRAL, NSW 2576.

### *October*

West Australian Branch — One day visit to gardens in the country town of York, date to be advised.

## NOVEMBER 1989

### *Thursday November 9*

Queensland Branch — Branch meeting at the Mt. Coot-tha Botanic Gardens.

### *Sunday November 12*

Tasmania Branch — PLANT FAIR at "ELSEMERE". This is a fund-raising event for the Society which proved to be great fun and tremendously successfully when held last year for the first time. Members donate their unusual plants, cuttings and other produce which are then sold at the Fair.

### *Sunday November 12*

ACT Branch — LANYON SPRING FAIR — AGHS Annual Plant Fair. Located at Lanyon Historic Homestead near Canberra. Always a lovely day. Contact Astrida Uptis on (063) 47 0665.

### *Sunday November 26*

ACT Branch — Garden visits to NIMMITABEL AND COOMA. The cost will be approximately \$15 and will include lunch. For more information contact Sue Jardine (064) 54 6210.

## DECEMBER 1989

### *Thursday December 7*

VIC Branch — Christmas party at the Fairfield Boathouse. This new venue for the December get-together should prove popular with families and with members interested in history on the Yarra. BYO everything (Bar-B-Q facilities available). See you there from 5.30pm onwards!

### *Saturday December 9*

Queensland Branch — Christmas outing and Picnic, venue to be decided.

## ACT MONARO, RIVERINA GROUP

### Recording and Restoring Gardens Seminar

Mid-winter in the south may be a quiet time in the garden but it is a busy time for learning about garden history. At a recent seminar in Canberra, a wealth of information was shared on the practical aspects of recording gardens, researching their history, measuring and drawing a garden plan, identifying plants and knowing where to find unusual, old plants.

Searching and recording the history of a garden is like a detective story without the crime. As Myra Webb put it, you must be persistent, follow all clues and remember to write everything down.

Local committee members, Richard Ratcliffe and Jim Webb gave us hints on how to record and measure a garden and identify the plants within it.

"Where do you get it?" — was the catch cry of local ex-nurseryman, Cedric Bryant who described sources of old and unusual plants. The importance of obeying quarantine rules was stressed and, as it turns out, many seeds and cuttings can be legally brought into Australia if done in the right way.

Mrs Royds, from Durham Hall near Braidwood, humorously described her initial contact with the AGHS when, a few years ago, 200 of its members wandered around their garden during an Annual Conference. Since then, the Royds have become avid AGHS members and their old world garden has been surveyed and recorded by the local group. Her personal feelings about history in a garden, with all its ups and downs ... the floods, the snow, the weeds, the work ... made this a most entertaining talk.

Finally, David Calderwell talked about restoring the gardens of the Australian Disaster College at Mt. Macedon, destroyed during the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires.

The seminar ended the following morning with a visit to The Lodge, the Prime Minister's residence. Here, political history has become part of the garden's history, the plantings are a testimony of past occupants and their

official guests. The new management plan for the restoration and conservation of the garden was welcomed by the group.

By the end of the seminar one was inspired to research and document one's own suburban patch. After all, that too is a part of garden history. Thank you to all the speakers and participants.

*Astrida Uptis*



## TASMANIA

Tasmania has been having a wet winter, and what better and more stimulating way to wile away the hours than to listen to Donna Sommerville. About 70 members came to a beautifully illustrated winter time lecture on *The Perennial Border* at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne.

We were very privileged to be able to share in Donna's experience and to have the opportunity to ask her lots of questions concerning problems we all have in the garden. This theme will be continued at our AGM, when Mr John Gray is speaking to us on "What perennials to plant where in Tasmania". John is well known to our members for his informative lectures; he is always happy to help the Society, and makes us think about what gardening is really all about. The AGM is to be held at the Longford Bowl's Club on August 20, 1989.

On September 15 we are going to the Moorella Bulb farm on Bruny Island. This will be a real treat for bulb lovers as Moorella has a wonderful selection of plants.

Our garden fair has been organised for November 19, so please start potting up your plants and put the date into your calendar. Mr and Mrs G. Taylor have kindly offered us their garden as the venue and we look forward to

seeing your jams, jellies, cakes, produce, plants, etc, to make this fair the success our last one was.

The Committee have a very full and exciting programme well under way for 1990; a full year's itinerary will be in the first local newsletter in 1990 so that you can keep the days free well in advance. This Journal will also publish details so we do hope to see some visitors from other parts of Australia at our events in the future.

## NEXT ISSUE

Prince Alfred Park, Sydney

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in its wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this Journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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TREASURER  
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